AFRICAN AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS' CONCEPTUALIZATIONS AND EMOTIONAL REACTIONS TO THE N-WORD: A VIGNETTE STUDY

BY

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THESIS

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Abstract

One-hundred-and-sixty-six African American college students completed a paper-and-pencil survey designed to examine students' level of acceptance of both forms (*nigga* and *nigger*) of the n-word based on a vignette. Additionally, participants were also asked about their general understanding of both forms of the n-word, the frequency of their personal use, the frequency in which they observe, and their emotional reactions to use of both forms of the n-word. Results indicated that on average, men used the words *nigga* and *nigger* more often than women. Although participants used the word *nigger* considerably less than the word *nigga*, they conceptualized the words similarly as evidenced in both open-ended and quantitative data. Overwhelmingly, participants indicated that it was not acceptable to use either word in public; certain contexts, though, were identified in which either word was acceptable, such as an educational context. Additionally, participants' levels of acceptance indicated that the race of the speaker mattered more in their level of acceptance than the actual form of the n-word.

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Chapter 1

African American College Students' Conceptualizations and Emotional Reactions to the N-Word: A Vignette Study

Six letters, arranged in a particular way, create more than just a disyllabic word. "N-i-g-g-e-r" creates a racial slur against African Americans so heinous that few other words in any language embody this amount of racial hatred. Surprisingly, there is very little research examining people's emotional responses to the use of this word. In the current study, I focus on African American college students' conceptualizations and emotional reactions to the word *nigger,* as well as their conceptualizations and emotional reactions to the word *nigga,* a derivative of the original form. To contextualize the study, I first provide a historical background and overview of the use of the n-word. I then discuss how the historical significance of the n-word is closely linked to linguistic implications and the importance of language when considering the impact the n-word has had on African Americans. After this, I discuss the contemporary use of the n-word and support the discussion with contemporary literature and research. I conclude with a discussion on the implications of this study and future directions for further research on this important issue.

Historical Background

In his *The N Word: Who Can Say it, Who Shouldn't and Why* (2007), journalist Jabari Asim stated that the majority of lexicographers trace the origin of "niggers" and "Negroes" back to the "niger," which is Latin for "black." Moreover, from its inception, the word *nigger* unfortunately has had the power to belittle, denigrate, and dehumanize African Americans. After all, "from the outset, the British and their colonial counterparts relied on language to maximize the idea of difference between themselves and their African captives" (Asim, p. 10). Over time, the n-word has become one of the most infamous racial slurs of the English language, evolving

into the paradigmatic slur. It is the origin of many additional racial slurs, such as referring to the Irish as the "niggers of Europe" or Palestinians as the "niggers of the Middle East" (as cited in Kennedy, 2002, p. 27). This word also has been applied to inanimate objects, such as bowling balls (nigger eggs), watermelons (nigger hams), or heavy boots (nigger stompers; as cited in Kennedy, 2002, pp. 27-28).

It is because of this history that some argue that the n-word holds a special status as a racial insult. Attorney Christopher Darden, one of the prosecutors during the O.J. Simpson trial, branded *nigger* as "the filthiest, dirtiest, nastiest word in the English language" (as cited in Kennedy, 2002, p. 28). Following the same line of thinking, Court of Appeals Judge Stephen Reinhardt argued that the word is "the most noxious racial epithet in the contemporary American lexicon" (as cited in Kennedy, p. 28). Journalist Farai Chideya (as cited in Kennedy) further described the word as "the all-American trump card, the nuclear bomb of racial epithets" (p. 28). Randall Kennedy, professor of law, further makes apparent the seriousness of the situation, as well as possible consequences of comparing racial slurs. When dealing with such an emotionally involved issue as racial slurs, he argued, one must be careful not to label any specific term as the superlative epithet, which would subsequently create a hierarchy among the terms, thus prioritizing victim status (Kennedy).

In addition to being a demeaning racial slur, the n-word has historically lead to racial separation due to political agendas. For example, the decision to deny Blacks citizenship by omitting the abolishment of slavery from the Declaration of Independence enabled the concept of race to emerge as a new principle or motive in the drama of American democracy. Race would become a large influence upon all of the nation's principles and became the source of a war of words, *nigger* being one of the primary culprits, that has continued into the twenty-first century

(Asim, 2007). If we were to look back through American history, we can see that the n-word has always been more than just a word because it rests on a foundation of racial injustice. "Throughout the history of the United States, the common language of its people has possess a vocabulary that, like most languages, inscribes often subtextually, social hierarchies. In the US, many of these linguistic markers of the social order are racialized" (Gillespie, 2010, p. 134). In sum, the n-word has served as more than just a vulgar put-down: it has been used as a means of applying racial stratification and establishing a closely intertwined class hierarchy based on the racial principles.

Linguistic Importance

Understanding the actual linguistic history of the word should also be considered, as language has the possibilities of being generative and empowering (Gillespie, 2010). Language too often is solely approached from the angle of how people use it rather than also including the reason why they use it. For example, in 1998, the Merriam-Webster dictionary was scrutinized for the way it defined certain racial slurs. In this edition of the dictionary, the word *nigger* was defined as: 1) "a black person" and 2) "member of any dark skinned race" (as cited in Himma, 2002, p. 512). Groups such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) found the first definition offensive, saying that the dictionary seemed to equate the word *nigger* and black person. The troubling issue here is that because the dictionary defined the n-word in this way, it may be implied that as a matter of definition that Black people truly are "niggers." Moreover, in its lexical definition, the Merriam-Webster authors merely take note of the slur, and assert that they are doing no more than reporting empirical patterns of use among competent speakers (Himma, 2002). However, the competent speakers that use this word will do so to describe Black people. Therefore, some object to the Merriam-Webster dictionary defining

nigger in this way because it endorses a racist claim. The editors of the dictionary who are responsible for this definition assumed that the definition was ultimately inoffensive.

Himma (2002) pointed out that words which are usually interpreted as offensive often describe intimate body parts or bodily functions. So, just as Merriam-Webster's definition of the n-word may be an offensive means (i.e., defining Black people as "niggers") of conveying inoffensive content (i.e., Black people), words like *nigger* are only used to describe content that is not inherently morally objectionable. Additionally, the familiarity of the speaker and listener may determine the level of offensiveness and appropriateness (Himma). However, this is not to say that words which are actually offensive in their content do not exist. It is the content of *nigger* as a racial slur that makes the word, which represents a racist ideology, offensive.

Nigga: Reclaiming a positive identity

According to Kennedy (2002), African Americans use the word *nigga*, a derivative of the word *nigger*, as a rhetorical boomerang against racism and as a term of endearment. In doing so, what traditionally has been seen as an insult can also be complimentary. Some of those in support of using *nigga* recognize it as less offensive than *nigger* (Kennedy). For instance, some African Americans, including rapper Mos Def, believe that if African Americans refer to each other as *nigga*, they take a word that historically has been used to degrade and oppress, and turn it into a term of endearment. The concept here is that if the word is used often enough and becomes a standard word in our vocabulary without consequences, then it offers empowerment for its user (Asim, 2007). The late and well-known rapper Tupac Shakur also tried to put a positive spin on the word *nigga*, using it as an acronym: "Never Ignorant and Getting Goals Accomplished" (Asim). At the core of Shakur's belief is the idea that the word *nigga* can be used without malice between African Americans.

The word *nigga* is greatly contested both within the African American community as well as within American society, in general. Some African Americans, especially younger African American men, continue to use *nigga* as a cordial greeting or term of endearment. Use of the word *nigga* is not limited to the African American community; others use the word, as well. If someone who is not African American uses the word *nigga*, the individual is often viewed as an outsider and thus the word may not have the same positive connotation.

The current use of the word *nigga* sits in paradox to the original racial slur. However, there is more significance to the paradox of suffixes than just understanding the origin of a linguistic derivative. A minor change in suffix can evoke emotions amongst African Americans anywhere along a continuum, ranging from brotherhood (*nigga*) to revulsion (*nigger*) (Dodson & Burrow, 2008). Although several scholars, activists, and artists have theorized about the difference in the use and meaning of the two versions of the n-word, there is surprisingly little empirical data about African Americans' understanding and usage of these words. Research is needed in this area so that we can discover potential positive and negative implications of using or not using either form of the n-word.

Understanding Use in Different Contexts

In one of the few empirical studies examining the use of the n-word, Motley and Craig-Henderson (2007) explored potential differences on participants' attitudes of *nigger* and *nigga* based on nationality. They conducted individual interviews with 52 people from different nationalities (i.e., African Americans, Blacks from the Caribbean, and Blacks from Africa) all living in the United States. Findings revealed that participants' nationalities mattered. Specifically, African American participants identified collective memories (i.e., "socially constructed knowledge of the past formed by group members and represents their present

interpretation of events, individuals, and objects from the past," p. 951) and autobiographical memories of the word (i.e., "the memory of events people have experienced," p. 951). Black participants from the Caribbean and from Africa reported more historical memories of the word (i.e., "the past stored and interpreted by social institutions," p. 951).

Although participants' "responses reflected a shared understanding of the differences in the meanings of *nigger* and *nigga*" (p. 953), Motley and Craig-Henderson (2007) offered little explanation as to how they arrived at the conclusion that participants differentiated use of either form of the n-word other than by saying "It appears racial status – and other commonalities such as experiences with being the targets of racist language, prejudice, or discrimination – supersedes ethnic origin and numerical majority/minority group status" (p. 953). Additionally, not much was offered to help readers understand African Americans' and non-African Americans' emotional reactions to the word *nigger*, other than two responses from interviewees.

Motley and Craig-Henderson (2007) did not clearly provide data about the terms' differential use or participants' impressions based on in-group or out-group status of the speaker. The two responses previously mentioned did not truly get at the core of explaining African American and non-African Americans' responses because similarly to their analysis of emotional reactions, they use two separate forms of the word. Without knowing for certain the wording of the questions posed to the participants, or if they controlled for possible gender differences, we cannot confidently draw a conclusion as to how participants conceptualized the significance of in-group or out-group status.

In a related study, Dodson and Burrow (2008) investigated the use of both forms of the n-word and their associations with racial identity, self-esteem, and the mental health of 121 African American college students attending a predominantly White, private Midwest university.

Findings indicated participants were more likely to use the word *nigga* if a family member or peer used the word. Individual differences such as musical genre preference and hours of television watched per week also were related to participants' use of *nigga* in conversation. Whether it was rap music, television shows, or a combination of the two (musical television), participants indicated that media greatly influenced their decision to use the word *nigga.* There were statistically significant correlations with both lower social support and lower Afrocentricity for those individuals who have previously been called *nigger.* Additionally, there was a statistically significant correlation for self reports of being called *nigga* and higher self-esteem.

Findings from both of these interdisciplinary studies suggest that there are differences in how each suffix is used and perceived. What is missing, however, is an exploration of who uses the word *nigger,* who uses the word *nigga,* and in what contexts is either form used. For example, do African American men use the word *nigga* more than African American women? Additionally, what are the types of differences African Americans attribute to the different contexts in which use of either form of the n-word is viewed as acceptable? What are the emotional reactions after hearing use of either form of the n-word? Working towards answering these questions can provide scholars, educators, and family members with a greater sense of awareness of how use of either form of the n-word can impact them, particularly emotionally. The current study aims to address some of the gaps in the literature.

Current Study

In the present investigation, I build on my earlier work (Dodson & Burrow, 2008) by attempting to identify when both forms of the n-word are used and who uses either/both forms. In addition, the short-responses from my work with Burrow suggested that there were strong emotional reactions from participants when asked about the use of both forms of the n-word.

However, this was not the purpose of the study, and was subsequently not explored. Therefore, in the current study I directly explore the students' emotional reaction to the use of the words *nigger* and *nigga.* The following three research purposes guide the project: 1) To investigate the frequency in which African American college students personally use the n-word and observe it used by others, 2) To identify and describe level of acceptance of both forms of the n-word. Specifically, I will describe the themes that emerge from use of both forms of the n-word and examine if African American college students' levels of acceptance of the n-word differ based on one's gender or the suffix and/or race of speaker, and 3) To explore potential differences in African American college students' emotional reactions to the n-word differ based on their gender or suffix and/or race of speaker.

The current study uses a single vignette to explore African American college students' perceptions of the acceptableness for both forms of the n-word. As Stolte (1994) suggested, vignette experiments should be executed under contextual conditions that minimize satisficing, which occurs when participants process vignette information less carefully and effectively than they would under ideal or real conditions. Furthermore, multiple sources (Cannings &Talley, 2002; Chau et al., 2001; Tettegah, 2002b, 2004; Tettegah & Kien, 2003; Tettegah & Neville, 2004; as cited in Tettegah, 2005) have found that anonymity afforded by vignettes allows researchers to circumvent resistance from participants exposed to evaluative methods and peer discussions of emotionally charged topics such as race. Vignettes allow participants to openly and honestly express their reactions to something concrete instead of abstractly thinking about a topic. A vignette methodology was chosen for this study because it allowed me to control how participants would respond to use of the n-word in a specific context instead of each participant reacting to items with generalized conceptualizations.

Method

Design

Participants were randomly assigned into one of four vignette conditions: (a) a Black speaker using the word *nigga,* (b) a Black speaker using the word *nigger,* (c) a White speaker using the word *nigga,* or (d) a White speaker using the word *nigger,* thus creating four conditions for each gender. Only the form of the n-word and the race of the speaker were manipulated in the vignette.

Participants

The participants in this study were 166 (68 men and 98 women) self-identified African American undergraduate students attending a large pubic Midwest university. Participants' age ranged from 18 to 30 (M = 20.43, SD = 2.061). An overwhelming majority (n = 147, 88.6%) identified as Christian. The majority of the participants indicated that they were somewhat religious or spiritual (n = 73, 44%) or very religious or spiritual (n = 60, 36.1%). All but 1 individual was born in the U.S.A. Almost two-thirds (n = 108, 65.1%) were raised in an urban environment. About one third (n = 52, 31.3%) were raised in a suburban environment.

Measures

Vignette

A vignette was created for this study. Particular care was used to create a vignette that would accurately portray the use of either form of the n-word, while maintaining syntax that would be representative of an actual dialogue. In addition, the vignette was revised and piloted among a multiracial and mixed gender research group. The scenario was based on a real interaction between a college roommate dyad. In addition, I wanted to ensure that there was not any extra variability in how participants would conceptualize how acceptable it was for the

speaker to use either form of the n-word other than his racial background. This was also the reason why both roommates were from the same city. The listener's response was intentionally omitted so that participants' reactions were not influenced.

> *Background: Kevin is speaking to Brandon, his college roommate. Kevin is a [White American…African American] and grew up in the Chicago area. Brandon is African American and he also grew up in the Chicago area.*
>
> Kevin: Why do you always play your music so loud? It really bothers me when I'm trying to study. That's something only a [nigga…nigger] would do.

Acceptance of the n-word. In this study, I explored participants' level of acceptance of the n-word in two ways: In reaction to the n-word being used in the vignette, and use of the n-word in general.

Degree of acceptance of the use of the n-word in the vignette. Participants completed five items that ask for their personal reactions to the vignette measured on a 5-point, Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). Items were developed for this study to assess the importance of Kevin's racial background in participants' level of acceptance for his use of *nigga* or *nigger*. Additionally, these items assessed the use *nigga* or *nigger* in different ways, such as how appropriate participants felt it was for Kevin as an individual to use the respective word, how participants reacted to the use of the respective word, use of the word depending on the familiarity between the speaker and the listener, and how necessary it was for Kevin to use the respective word instead of a comparable, alternative word. The items were: "I think that it is ok for Kevin to use the word *nigga* (*nigger*)", "It really bothered me that Kevin used the word *nigga* (*nigger*)", "If Kevin knew Brandon for a long period of time, then I think that it would be ok for him to use the word *nigga* (*nigger*)", and "I think that Kevin could have made his point without using the word *nigga* (*nigger*)." Items 2 and 4 were reverse scored to

maintain the notion that a higher numerical score directly translated to a higher level of acceptance.

Degree of acceptance of the use of the n-word in general. In addition to gathering responses about perceptions of the n-word as it was used in the vignette, I assessed participants' general perceptions of the n-word. To assess participants' level acceptance of both forms of the n-word, 7 items were constructed based on the basis of the findings from Dodson and Burrow (2008). Every participant was asked the 7 items, measured on a 5-point, Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). Items included: "People should not use the word *nigga* (*nigger*)", "*Nigga* (*nigger*) is an offensive word", "There is a difference between the words *nigga* and *nigger*", and "There are appropriate times to use the word *nigga* (*nigger*)." None of these items were reversed scored.

In addition to these 7 items, participants were asked to write-in three-sentence open-ended responses to elaborate on items 6 and 7. Open-ended responses to these two items were of particular interest because they provide more information about the contexts in which participants felt the n-word could be used appropriately. I used thematic analysis to identify core themes emerging from the data. Specifically, I combined and catalogued related patterns into sub-themes. "Themes that emerge from the informants' stories are pieced together to form a comprehensive picture of their collective experience" (Aronson, 1994). Being coded into one theme did not deny participants' responses from being coded into another. In addition to my own coding, another person independently coded the data. Discrepancies were handled via consensus.

Personal use of the n-word. Two questions were asked to further explore the frequency with which participants' use of both forms of the n-word. For example, participants were asked:

"How often do you use the word *nigga*?" and "How often do you use the word *nigger*?" Participants' responses were either *never*, *rarely*, *frequently*, or *very often*.

Perceived use of the n-word by others. Two questions were asked to assess participants' perceptions of the use of both forms of the n-word by others. For example, participants were asked: "How often do you hear the word *nigga* used by the following groups?" and "How often do you hear the word *nigger* used by the following groups?" Participants' response were either *never*, *rarely*, *frequently*, or *very often*.

Emotional reactions to the use of the n-word. The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) was used to measure participants' affect after reading the vignette. It was selected because of its ability to be used as a measure of salient emotions, as well as its strong psychometric support. Developed with a sample of undergraduate students and validated with adult populations, the PANAS consists of 20 different adjectives, each describing a different emotion (e.g., interested, scared, determined). The PANAS can be used to measure salient emotions at seven different time points: (a) right now, that is, at the present moment, (b) today, (c) during the past few days, (d) during the past week, (e) during the past few weeks, (f) during the past year, and (g) in general, that is, on the average. In the current study, participants were asked about their emotions at the "right now" time point. Participants placed a numerical value (1 – *very slightly or not at all*; 2 – *a little*; 3 – *moderately*; 4 – *quite a bit*; 5 – *extremely*) next to each adjective, representing the degree to which they felt each emotion at the time they completed the survey. There have been numerous positive affect and negative affect scales created and applied to diverse research areas. Watson et al. developed the PANAS because of the low reliability and validity of many of the other preexisting measures.

Reliability estimates reported in Watson et al. (1988) study with students from a private southwestern university ranged from .86 to .90 for the Positive Affect (PA) scale and .84 to .87 for the Negative Affect (NA) scale. For the "right now" time point, Watson et al. reported reliability estimates of .89 for the PA scale and .85 for the NA scale, the second highest reliability estimates in both respective scales. Crawford and Henry (2004) reported reliability estimates for the PA scale ranging from .88 to .90 and .84 to .87 for the NA scale with members of the general adult population as participants. For the sample in the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient for the PA scale score was .89 and the NA scale score was .78.

Manipulation check. A question was used to check participants' recall of Kevin's racial background (i.e., a key factor of the "manipulation" in the study). A second question was used to check participants' recall of Brandon's racial background. Data for participants who answered either question incorrectly based on their randomly assigned vignette type, or if they answered *I don't know* to either question, was not included in the analysis.

Demographic sheet. A demographic information sheet was constructed for this study. Participants were asked about their religious affiliation, spirituality, nationality, ethnicity, race, and parents' highest level of education.

Procedure

Participants were recruited in a number of ways: Africana Studies and Educational Psychology courses, the Educational Psychology subject pool, student organizations that were self-identified with ideals to directly support African American and Black members, and Black Greek Fraternities and Sororities. I received IRB approval for human subjects and the treatment of participants was in accordance with the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association. The survey (see Appendix A for complete survey) consisted of one of four distinct

vignettes, six sections which assessed acceptance of the n-word, general understanding of the n-word, the frequency with which participants have both personally used and also heard the n-word used, a scale to measure their emotional reactions, and a seventh section to obtain demographic information. Sections were comprised mostly of items with scaled responses, with the exception of two open-ended response in the general understanding of the n-word section. On average, participants took approximately 10 minutes to complete the survey.

A total of 166 participants were included in the final analysis based on the criterion that they self-identified as African American or Black and that they answered the two manipulation check items correctly. Eleven observations (5 men, 6 women) were not included because they answered one or both of the manipulation check items incorrectly. Participants in African American Studies classes, student organizations and Black Greek Fraternities and Sororities were entered into a lottery to win one of four $50 cash prizes. Participants in the Educational Psychology classes were presented with the option of being entered into a lottery to win one of four $50 cash prizes or receive 1 course credit. Participants marked their choice on a Lottery or Course Credit Sheet they would later turn in with their completed survey. Participants were instructed that before starting the survey, they should read through the Informed Consent Waiver and keep it for their records. Participants completed the survey on an individual basis to allow for more genuineness, privacy, and anonymity. From the 9 classes that I visited, 8 professors allowed class time to complete the survey, so participants completed it and turned it directly into me. In these instances, I was sure to keep the Lottery or Course Credit Sheet separate from the survey to maintain anonymity. In the remaining class, the professor allowed me to describe the study, pass out the surveys with manila envelopes, and then come back the next time the class met to collect the studies. After receiving instructions from the experimenter, participants were

reminded that the nature of the experiment was to investigate African American college students' conceptualizations of the n-word. Participants were verbally asked to not discuss anything about the survey with anyone. The four $50 cash prize winners were randomly selected approximately three weeks after final data collection was completed. Winners were notified via email.

Results

Preliminary analysis

I cleaned the data by checking for data entry errors. I inspected the assumptions of normality for the scales and all but one was acceptable. For the level of acceptance scale, the skewness statistic was 0.76 and kurtosis -0.46. For the general understanding of the n-word, the skewness statistic was 0.48 and kurtosis -0.25. For the PA subscale, the skewness was -0.12 and kurtosis -0.77. The NA subscale did not meet assumptions of normality; the skewness statistic was 1.76 and kurtosis 3.75. To address this, I transformed the NA subscale using the square root transformation; the kurtosis after the transformation was acceptable (1.60).

I then checked the reliability of the scales. Alpha coefficients were examined and item analysis was conducted. From the first four items that measured participants' level of acceptance of the n-word in the vignette, item 2 "It really bothered me that Kevin used the word *nigga*" was dropped because it did not correlate with the total score. In the following section comprised of questions that measured participants' acceptance based on their general understanding of the n-word, item 5 "There is a difference between the words *nigga* and *nigger*, item 6 "There are appropriate times to use the word *nigga*", and item 7 "There are appropriate times to use the word *nigger*" were dropped because they did not correlate with the total score. The alpha coefficient estimate for the appropriateness scale was .69, $M = 1.75$, $SD = .75$ (see Table 1).

The first four out of seven items were summed and averaged as a measure of participants' general understanding of the n-word. The last three items in this section of the survey were not included because they did not have a strong association with the other four items and they were conceptually different. The alpha coefficient estimate for the general understanding scale was .84. Out of a possible score of 5.0, the general understanding levels were relatively low, with the mean scores of 1.98 and 2.06, respectively. Additionally, although the item "There is a difference between the words *nigga* and *nigger*" was not included in the general level of understanding total score, it should be noted that well over half of the participants (n = 98, 59.0%) stated that they either disagree or strongly disagree that there is a difference between the two forms of the n-word.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics Based on Different Scales

Scale	*M*	*SD*	α
Level of Acceptance	1.75	0.75	.69
General Understanding of the N-Words	1.98	0.77	.84
PA Subscale	29.81	0.52	.89
NA Subscale	14.61	0.26	.78

Note: Level of Acceptance is the degree to which participants felt use of either form of the n-word was appropriate in the vignette with a possible range from 1-5. General Understanding of the N-Words is participants' broader conceptualizations of both forms of the n-word with a range from 1-5. PA subscale is the Positive Affect subscale with a possible range from 10-50. NA subscale is the Negative Affect subscale with a possible range from 10-50.

Emerging themes regarding levels of acceptance

Below and in Table 2, I describe the themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of the open-ended data from the two questions about the appropriate use of the n-word.

Themes for use of the word nigga. The following nine themes emerged from the content of the responses to the question "Using at least three sentences, please tell us more about your

response to item #6: There are appropriate times to use the word *nigga*." Of the nine themes that emerged from 146 responses, seven described contexts in which use would be appropriate, one theme described a sense of indifference or neutrality in use, and one theme reported that use of the word *nigga* was not appropriate in any context.

Not ok; unacceptable. The majority of codes indicated that regardless of how the word *nigga* is used, it is not appropriate. Individuals who use the word may be using it as a counter to the original form of the n-word, but the word is offensive, nonetheless. Some participants indicated that because the difference between the word *nigga* and the word *nigger* possibly could be misconstrued, individuals should simply not use the word *nigga*. One participant wrote: "This word is bad. It should not be used by anyone. This word represents oppression and sorrow."

Ok among Blacks. About a third of the responses indicated that the word is appropriate when it is used among Blacks in general, as well as among Black friends and/or acquaintances; it is an exclusive right for Blacks. One participant discussed the complexities of both terms in this way: "Nigga/nigger are both derogatory terms used to describe Black people, just like bitch is a bad word for women. Because of this, anyone who's not Black cannot use the word. If someone Black uses it it's fine because it is implied that one wouldn't use a self-degrading word to put down someone of similar background. Therefore, nigga is used amongst friends who are Black, and women call each other bitch in a non-threatening way. However, if a man did it, since he is not what the word describes, it would be offensive. Bottom line: you have to belong to the group to use the word."

Ok as term of endearment. Approximately one-in-four responses noted that *nigga* is appropriate when it is used as a positive emotion, reflecting a sense of endearment. Some argued that it is a replacement for other terms of endearment such as "dude" or "bro/brother." These

responses also highlighted a certain level of comfort/familiarity that could be present between the speaker and the listener. For example, one participant said: “It is used almost as a term of endearment in some instances. Insults gain power when you give them power. I do not think its use is the most terrible thing.”

Ok among friends. Some participants believed the word is appropriate when referring to or is used with friends, but the race of the friends is not specified. In these responses, there is certain level of familiarity between the speaker and listener. For example, one participant stated: “I don't feel there are appropriate times. However, I use the word nigga when I'm referring to friends. Also when I'm conversing with friends, I may use the word nigga.”

Indifference/Neutrality. A few of the participants did not express feelings about the appropriateness of the word *nigga* or remained neutral about its use. In the following quote, the participant talks about being conflicted about the use of the word and unsure of where he or she stands: “I know that people use the term ‘nigga’ to refer to their friends, but ‘nigger’ is more racial. I'm kind of torn between the subject, but overall use of the word is wrong.”

Ok in an academic and/or educational environment. Only about five percent of the responses indicated that there are times when it is okay to use the word to help educate others about its personal or historical meaning. For example, one participant noted: “There are sometimes when it is ok to use it when explaining the word and how it makes you feel but not to say to someone.”

Ok as a counter to the hurtful form of the “n-word”. A few participants believed the word is appropriate when it is used as a means of countering or overcoming the oppressive effects of the word *nigger* on African Americans. One student illustratively noted: “Nigga is a term that was used to demean us as a race but somehow over the course of time its become

acceptable. Among groups of African Americans it can be used as a way to address each other but in a positive light. It's like how people take a negative and turn it to a positive."

Ok to describe behavior not related to race. A few participants noted that the word is appropriate when it is used to describe negative or ignorant behavior as long as there were no racial undertones. Descriptions of appropriate use refer explicitly to behavior. For example, one participant noted: "When people use 'nigga' to me the word indicates ignorance of some sort. There may be a few instances when use of the word is appropriate, such as explaining that you don't have to be black to be a 'nigga.'"

Ok in Rap music. Only two participants identified the word as appropriate when it is used in music, particularly in the genre of Rap. One of these two participants said: "The 'N' word is used a lot in music & most youths; at first I was shocked and a little offended but now it's just normal."

Table 2

Themes, Examples of Themes, and Frequency of Themes

Theme	Example	Frequency (%)
Not Ok; Unacceptable	"Its an unacceptable. Its purpose is to create a loophole for people who want to use the real word. There is no reason to use the word."	90 (61.6)
Ok among Blacks	"I feel that it shouldn't be used. But since it is used I feel that it should only be used by African Americans. When other ethnicity's use it, it sounds offensive even when they don't mean to sound that certain way."	49 (33.6)
Ok as Term of Endearment	"[People] use *nigga* as a term of [e]ndearment also as a word like 'bro.' But when people use *nigger* its to be disrespectful all the time."	38 (26.0)
Ok among Friends	"I, myself, use the word amongst my friends. I see any time as being appropriate when I am with people close to me. There is no negativity with it."	24 (16.4)
Indifference/Neutrality	"I neither agree nor disagree with the statement. I think it depends on the person and their views on the word. It is subject to interpretation."	16 (11.0)
Ok in an Academic and/or Educational Environment	"I believe the word 'nigga' can be appropriate at times. I do not believe it is wrong to use the word for educational purposes. I also think it is appropriate if it is used in a play or depiction of the days of slavery because that is the way they spoke."	8 (5.5)
Ok as a Counter to the Hurtful Form of the "N-Word"	"The term "nigger" has been a term that has oppressed the African American community for many years. However, these past years the term *nigga* has been used by the African American community to overcome the oppression from the word "nigger." It is a term of endearment and I agree that "nigga" is appropriate at certain moments."	7 (4.8)
Ok to Describe Behavior Not Related to Race	"Nigga is just a term that African Americans can use. Niggas are often those act in an ignorant manner. If you act ignorant no matter what your color/race you should be referred to as a nigga (hood like)."	6 (4.1)
Ok in Rap Music	"Rap music makes it a necessary noun."	2 (1.4)

***Themes for use of the word* nigger.** The following five themes emerged from the content of the responses to the question "Using at least three sentences, please tell us more about your response to item #7: There are appropriate times to use the word *nigger*" (see Table 3). Of the five themes that emerged from 132 responses, three described contexts in which use would be appropriate, one theme described a sense of indifference, and one theme reported that use of the word *nigger* was not appropriate in any context.

Not ok; unacceptable. The overwhelmingly majority of the participants believed that regardless of how the word *nigger* is used, it is never appropriate. Some argued that due to the history and detrimental effects it has had on Blacks, it should not be used in any context. One participant succinctly captured this sentiment: "There are not any appropriate times to use the word nigger. It sounds so degrading and offensive."

Ok in an academic and/or educational environment. About two-in-ten of the participants felt that it is acceptable to use the word *nigger* to convey the accuracy and original emotionality of the word as it was used in its original or historical context within academic or educational environments or to educate people about its meaning. One participant said: "The appropriate times are during acts of educating. Nigger is used to show the seriousness of subjects that relate to the word. I can see teachers using the word."

Ok if only used by Blacks. Less than ten percent of participants believed Blacks can use the word without it being offensive. Some of the students believed when the word is used among Blacks, it is used to acknowledge the racial attitudes of others. This includes discussing others'/racists' use of the word. For example, one student wrote: "One 'acceptable' instance where the word 'nigger' is just as interchangeable with 'nigga'. It can be used as a greeting, or used to show an alliance/brotherhood amongst blacks primarily black men."

Indifference. A few participants were on the fence or were indifferent about the appropriateness of the word. One participant illustratively noted: "I neither agree nor disagree. It is hard to tell if someone is using the term as the term of endearment or for racial oppression. Using the term 'nigga' should be used instead for such appropriate times."

Ok if not used offensively. A handful of participants believed *nigger* can be used as long as it is not used in an offensive manner. There are no guidelines of how to distinguish between offensive and inoffensive. An example of this sentiment is as follows: "A person knows who to use that word with. You wouldn't say it to the wrong crowd having a conversation. Depending on the conversation (usually playful) I think it's ok."

Table 3

Themes, Examples of Themes, and Frequency of Themes

Theme	Example	Frequency (%)
Not Ok; Unacceptable	"The word holds too much power historically and it means so much. I do not think anyone should ever use the word no matter the context."	111 (84.1)
Ok in an Academic and/or Educational Environment	"I disagree because I think its a very hurtful word. However I agree somewhat because in a historical context, or in a classroom, it may be somewhat appropriate; as the strong word displays the intense situation/circumstances of Blacks in America's history."	28 (21.2)
Ok if Only Used by Blacks	"Once again, only Blacks can use it without it being offensive. But nobody really says it during conversation unless they're making fun of a racist of something so it's hard to say when it's cool to use it."	9 (6.8)
Indifference	"I'm pretty much on the fence about this. This term is not really used now so I never know how to react when hearing it. It can make people feel uncomfortable."	9 (6.8)
Ok if Not Used Offensively	"If the word is not used offensively it's acceptable."	8 (6.1)

Frequency of personal use and observed use of the n-word

The first research purpose was to investigate the frequency in which African American college students personally use the n-word and hear it used by others. To address this purpose, I computed descriptive information.

Personal use. For the word *nigga*, nearly 15% (n = 24) of the participants stated that they never use the word *nigga*, while over half (n = 86) stated they use the word either frequently or very often. For the word *nigger*, a little over two-thirds (n = 114) of the participants stated that they never use the word *nigger*, while only 4.2% stated that they use the word either frequently or very often. To examine potential gender differences in the use of the words *nigga* and *nigger*, I conducted two separate t tests, one with the use of word *nigga* and one with the use of word *nigger* as the dependent variable. The t-test was significant for both words: $t = 21.50$, $p < .000$ (*nigga*) and $t = 7.97$, $p < .000$ (*nigger*). Men, on average, reported greater use of the n-words (M = 1.78, SD = 0.86 for *nigga*, M = .49, SD = 0.59 for *nigger*) compared to women (M = 1.33, SD = 0.89 for *nigga*, M = .28, SD = 0.57 for *nigger*). Forty-six men (67.6%) reported that they personally use the word *nigga* frequently or very often compared to 40 women (40.8%). Conversely, 3 men (0.44%) reported that they use the word *nigger* frequently or very often compared to 4 women (0.41%) (see Figures 1 and 2).

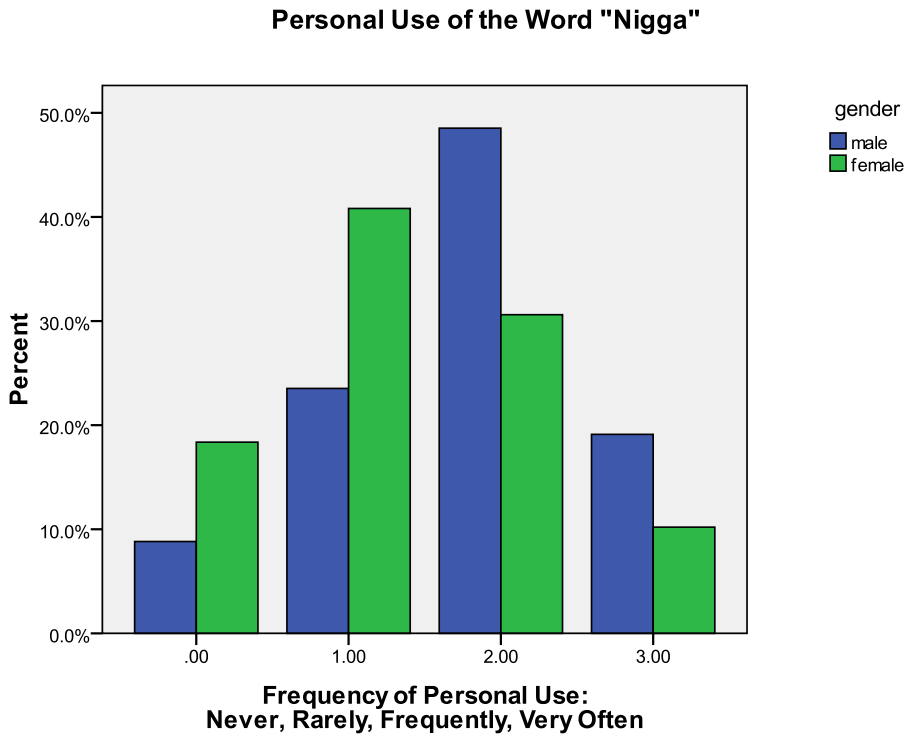


Figure 1. Personal use of the word nigga by gender

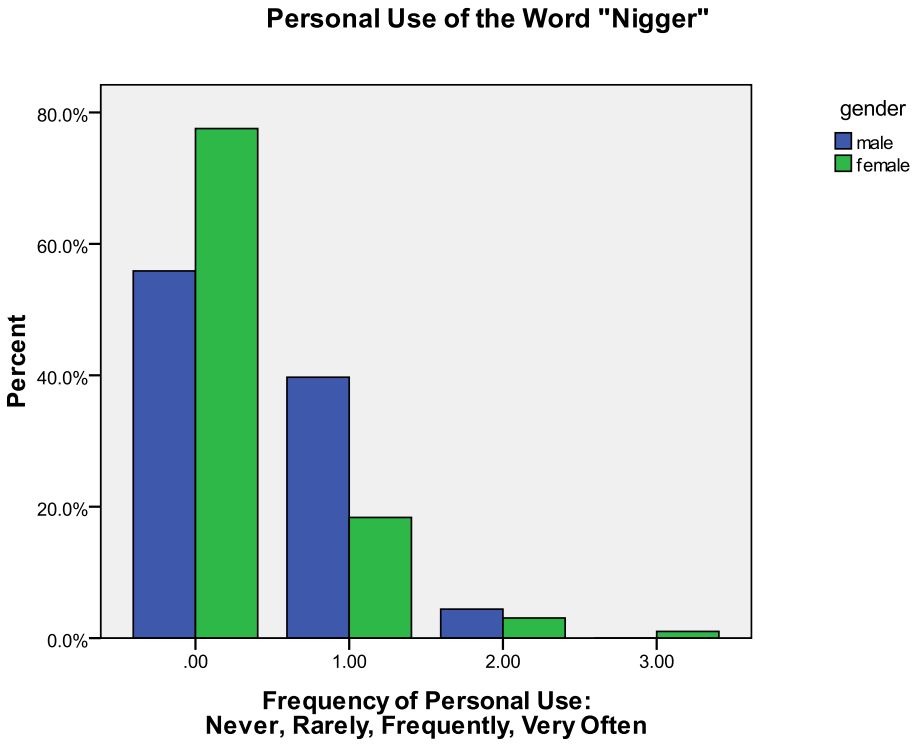
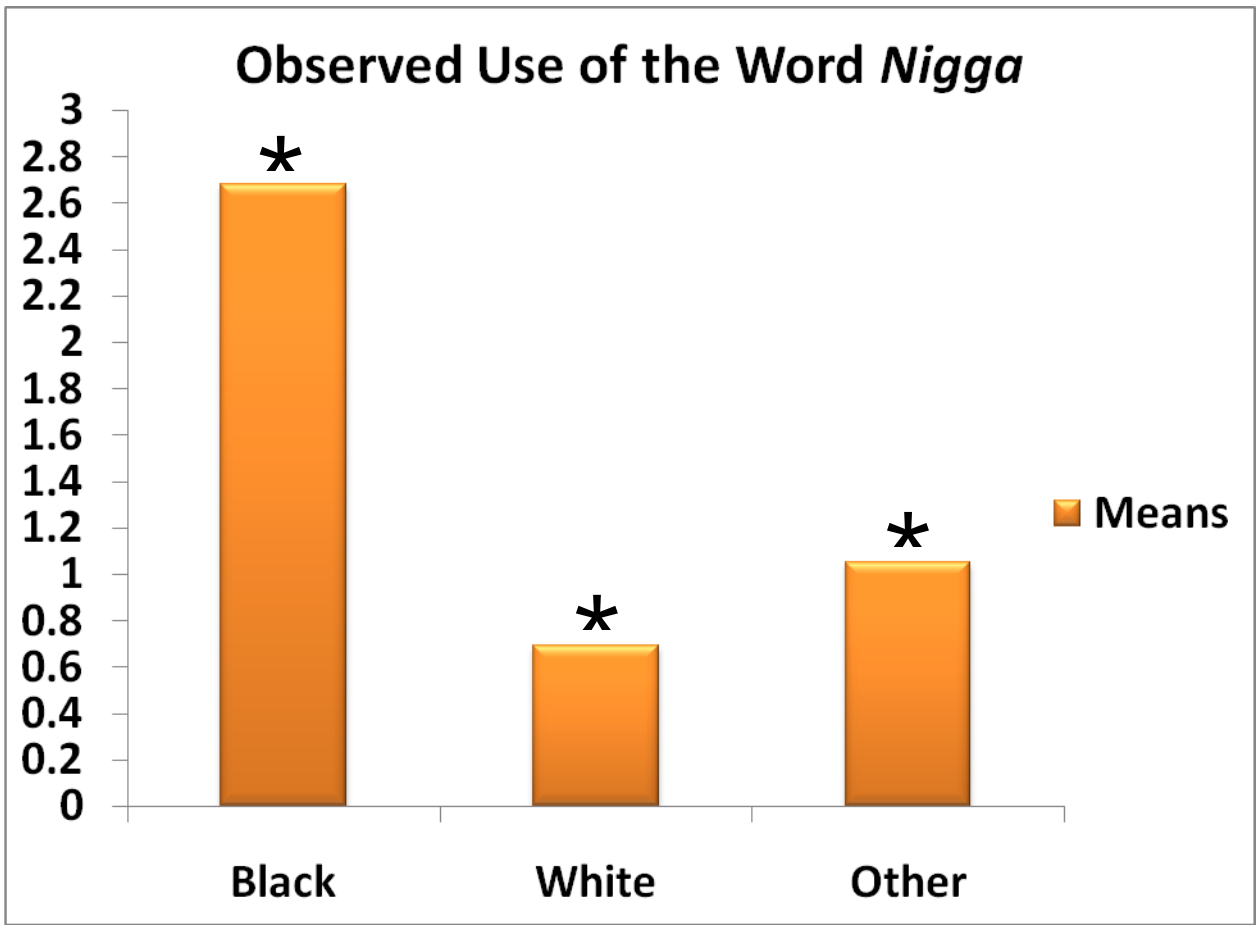


Figure 2. Personal use of the word nigger by gender

Observed use. I conducted a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to examine potential gender differences on participants' observed use of the n-words by racial background of the speaker (i.e., Black, White, other). The Box's M test for homogeneity of covariance was nonsignificant ($M = 4.44$, $p > .05$) for observed use of the word *nigga* and observed use of the word *nigger* ($M = 10.95$, $p > .05$), indicating that Wilks' Λ is an appropriate test. Findings did not indicate a main effect for gender on observed use of the word *nigga* by Blacks, Wilks' $\Lambda = .95$, $F(1, 163) = 0.02$; $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .00$, by Whites, Wilks' $\Lambda = .95$, $F(1, 163) = 0.01$; $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .00$, or by other racial groups, Wilks' $\Lambda = .95$, $F(4, 155) = 6.72$; $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .04$. Additionally, findings did not indicate a main effect for gender on observed use of the word *nigger* by Blacks, Wilks' $\Lambda = .99$, $F(1, 163) = 0.39$; $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .00$, by Whites, Wilks' $\Lambda = .95$,

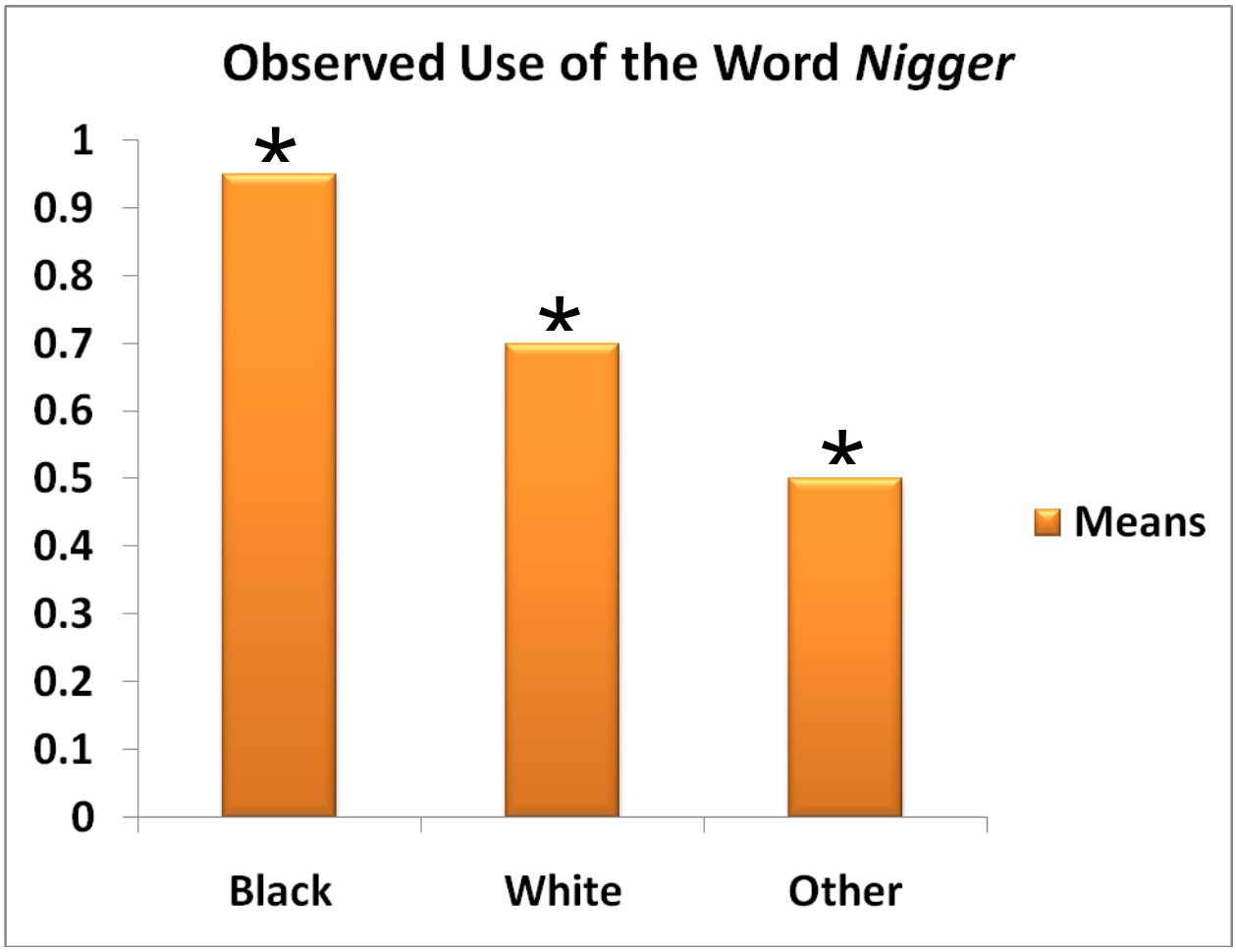
$F(1, 163) = 0.87$; $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .01$, or by other racial groups, Wilks' $\Lambda = .95$, $F(4, 155) = 0.31$; $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

For the word *nigga*, the majority of participants (*n* = 162, 97.6%) stated that they have heard Blacks use the word *nigga* either frequently or very often. Conversely, the majority of participants (*n* = 158, 95.2%) stated that they have heard Whites use the word rarely or not at all. Last, three-fourths (*n* = 125, 75.8%) of the participants stated that they rarely or never hear other racial groups use the word *nigga*. Findings from the dependent *t*-tests indicate that participants heard Blacks use the word *nigga* (*M* = 2.68, *SD* = 0.54) more than they heard either Whites (*M* = 0.69, *SD* = 0.58) or other racial and ethnic groups use the word (*M* = 1.05, *SD* = 0.74). For the word *nigger,* over three-fourths (*n* = 132, 79.5%) stated they have heard Blacks rarely or never use the word *nigger*. Additionally, the majority of participants (*n* = 154, 92.8%) have rarely or never heard Whites use the word *nigger*. This was also the trend for observed use by other racial groups, as the majority of participants (*n* = 155, 93.9%) stated they have rarely or never heard them use the word *nigger* (see Figures 3 and 4). Similar to the observed use of the word *nigga,* findings from dependent *t*-tests indicate that participants heard Blacks use the word *nigger* (*M* = 0.95, *SD* = 0.95) more than they heard the word used by Whites (*M* = 0.70, *SD* = 0.64) and other racial and ethnic groups (*M* = 0.50, *SD* = 0.65). Moreover, participants heard Blacks use the words *nigga* and *nigger* at similar rates (*t* = 21.77); the word *nigger* was heard being used significantly less than the word *nigga* by Whites (*t* = -.12) and other racial and ethnic groups (*t* = 8.93).



Note: *N* = 166

Figure 3. Observed use of the word nigga by speaker from different racial backgrounds



Note: *N* = 166

Figure 4. Observed use of the word nigger by speaker from different racial backgrounds

Gender differences in level of acceptance

The second research purpose was to identify and describe the level of acceptance of both forms of the n-word. To examine if African American college students' levels of acceptance of the n-word differed based on one's gender or the suffix and/or race of speaker, I conducted a 2 (gender) x 4 (vignette type) analysis of variance (ANOVA) with level of acceptance as the dependent variable. The analysis indicated a statistically significant gender effect on level of acceptance, $F(1, 156) = 6.86$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .04$. In addition, the analysis indicated a type of vignette effect on acceptance, $F(3, 156) = 36.50$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .41$. However, the interaction between gender by vignette was not statistically significant, $F(3, 156) = .59$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .01$. Tukey's honestly significant difference test indicated that the statistical significance for the level of acceptance was due more to the race of the speaker than it was to the actual suffix. Specifically, when the speaker was Black, participants stated that using either *nigger* or *nigga* was acceptable, but when the speaker was White, using either *nigger* or *nigga* was especially more not ok: (a) er, white speaker $M = 1.22$, $SD = 0.09$ (b) er black speaker $M = 2.15$, $SD = 0.09$ (c) a, white speaker $M = 1.39$, $SD = 0.09$, and (d) a, black speaker $M = 2.37$, $SD = 0.10$.

Emotional reactions based on vignette type

To test the third research question about African American college students' emotional reactions to the n-word differ based on their gender or suffix and/or race of speaker, I conducted a 2 (gender) x 4 (vignette type) multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to examine participants' emotional reactions to the n-word based on their gender and/or the vignette type; the two PANAS subscale scores served as the dependent variable. The Box's M test for homogeneity of covariance was nonsignificant ($M = 29.17$, $p > .05$), indicating that Wilks' Λ is an appropriate test. Findings did not indicate a main effect of gender on positive affect, Wilks' Λ

= .99, $F(1, 155) = .31$; $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .01$ or on negative affect, Wilks' $\Lambda = .99$, $F(1, 155) = 1.13$; $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .01$. The findings also did not indicate a main effect for vignette type on positive affect, Wilks' $\Lambda = .95$, $F(4, 155) = 1.01$; $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .01$ or negative affect, Wilks' $\Lambda = .95$, $F(1, 155) = 1.90$; $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .01$. The interaction terms were not significant.

Discussion

This study advances previous research (Motley & Craig-Henderson, 2007; Dodson & Burrow, 2008) on the use and understanding of both forms of the n-word. Findings support theoretical assertions about the meaning of the words, specifically both words were viewed in similar ways and overwhelmingly as unacceptable terms. Results also provide information about gender differences in the use of the words. In this study, men, on average, used and heard the words *nigga* and *nigger* more often than women. This difference in personal and observed use could mean that men have a higher level of acceptance for both forms of the n-word than women. Moreover, it could signify that men are more likely than women to conceptualize others' use as being more acceptable, and being more likely than women to view the practice of their own personal use as more acceptable.

In the quantitative findings, the majority of participants reported that it was never or rarely okay to use the n-words. Open-ended responses echoed the findings from the quantitative data. Most of the participants indicated that under no circumstance was it okay to use either *nigga* (61.6%) or *nigger* (84.1%). These findings are not surprising, especially for use of the word *nigger*. Scholars Kennedy (2002) and Asim (2007) which described use of the word *nigger* as a denigrating racial slur and should not be used. An overwhelming amount of the open-ended responses which stated that use of the word *nigger* was unacceptable recognized the historical

origin of the word rooted in slavery and that it was used as a racial slur to create a distinct difference between Whites and Blacks.

Although participants felt in general it was not acceptable to use the n-words, in the open-ended data they identified contexts in which use of the words were appropriate. Most of these contexts revolved around education. About one-fifth of the participants (21.2%) believed that it was okay to use the word to educate others about the history of the racially divisive word. Participants appeared to recognize the historical importance of the word and felt compelled to share with others why using the word would be inappropriate. A few participants (6.1%) noted that it was appropriate to use the word if it was used in a way that was not viewed as offensive. This seems to indicate that these participants felt that using the word required a certain degree of consciousness as to how use of the word could potentially have a negative impact on others.

Some of the themes that described appropriate use of the word *nigga* also were consistent with background information provided by Kennedy (2002) and Asim (2007). These authors argued that use of the word *nigga* has been seen as an exclusive right among African Americans as a rhetorical boomerang against racist use of the word *nigger* or as a term of endearment. This statement is consistent with the theme from the current study that says use of the word *nigga* is appropriate when it is used as a counter to the hurtful form of the n-word. This describes a sense of empowering one's self by using a derivative of the word *nigger*. A small percentage of participants (1.4%) described that using the word *nigga* in Rap music is appropriate. Thus, findings from Dodson and Burrow (2008), participants in the current study did not report as large of an influence in using the word *nigga* by media sources like rap music or musical television. This could be due to a priming effect in my early work with Burrow, as we asked participants

about their musical genre preferences before the reported which factors influenced their use of the word *nigga*.

Interestingly enough, although participants reported that there is not much difference between the words, most participants in the sample used the word *nigga* but rarely or never used the word *nigger*. This could mean that participants recognized that it may not be acceptable to use the word *nigga* in certain contexts but choose to do so anyway. For example, they may have felt that there are certain social benefits for using the word in a socially acceptable manner. Conversely, recognizing inappropriate use of the word *nigger* could be more apparent. They may have chosen not to use it because if it is not socially acceptable, there could be social repercussions. To date, I have not been able to find a published empirical article about the difference in conceptualization and applied use between the two words.

Findings from the current study indicate that it is not necessarily the specific form of the n-word that determines appropriateness, but rather, the race of the speaker. Participants reported a higher level of acceptance for using both words when the speaker was African American compared to White American. The participants did not believe it was acceptable for Whites to use either form of the n-word and were more tolerant of Blacks' use of the term. This could mean that participants feel offended and discriminated against by perceived racist language from a White American who called them either form of the n-word. This finding is consistent with Motley and Craig-Henderson's (2007) research. In their work, they described the influence of racist language on participants' conceptualizations of acceptable use of either form of the n-word. However, if a fellow African American called them either form of the n-word, it would not have the same effect. Perhaps the majority of the participants had the same response to either form of the n-word because use of the n-word is seen as an exclusive right for African

Americans. Additionally, the participants may have perceived use of the word *nigga* and use of the word *nigger* as just use of "the n-word," ignoring a difference in reading the suffix or how the words or pronounced.

The current study aimed to investigate if type of exposure to either form of the n-word was related to participants' affect, but the results were not significant; participants' level of positive and negative affect were approximately the same across the four conditions. There are several possible explanations for this finding. It may be that the PANAS was not a sensitive measure to assess participants' emotional reactions in this study. This could mean that participants' emotional reactions to this research topic could not be measured by completing a scale based on twenty adjectives. More than likely, though, reading one short vignette was not a significant stimulus to produce a differential effect on affect. In the future, researchers should expand future research about emotional reactions to the n-word by affording participants more space to share their experiences in open-ended data. Also, perhaps collecting PANAS scores on two different occasions may be helpful in assessing actual affective responses to the stimuli.

Limitations

Although the current study provides additional empirical data on the uses of both forms of the n-word, as a pilot study, there are limitations. The self-report nature of the study could be a factor in the way participants responded; social desirability may have been a factor. Specifically, participants' may have wanted to appear more or less accepting in use of the words and thus responded in a way that is different from their actual conceptualizations.

There were also other psychometric limitations. None of the scales used, with the exception of the PANAS, have been empirically supported or validated in previous empirical research. Specifically, it is unclear if the construct validity and alpha coefficient estimates from

the current investigation would also be found in other samples. Findings from this study are based on one sample of African American college students attending a predominantly White institution in the Midwest. It is unclear if these findings will generalize to other African Americans college students at a college or university with a more diverse student body or at a historically Black college or university throughout different regions of the country. Recruiting participants who are not in college would allow for widening of the participants' age range and other influential background characteristics.

Implications and directions for future research

This study was an initial attempt to address the gaps in the literature by providing empirical findings about appropriate use of both forms of the n-word and emotional reactions to use of both forms of the n-word. Findings have implications for professors and student affairs personnel. For example, because people do not find the word acceptable but they hear the word used and use the words themselves, implementing psychoeducational programming around understanding language on college campuses could prove to be effective. One can infer that the findings from this study would inform multiracial peer relations among college students and how use of either form of the n-word is potentially used and received. For example, White students who used the word *nigga* in predominantly White social circles prior to enrolling in college might not be conscience of how their language can detrimentally impact their new African American peers. Research should aim to clarify the misconceptions of the n-word, and above all else, expand the dialogue for talking about the n-word in the realm of education as well as in the entertainment industry. Use of either from of the n-word is not as universally beneficial or detrimental as some may have thought. Future studies can also potentially use the gender of the speaker as an independent variable to help measure the level of acceptance for use of both forms

of the n-word since the current study discovered gender differences in acceptance of use. Lastly, future studies that wish to employ vignette methodology could use vignettes of multiple scenarios or even online multimedia vignettes.

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Appendix A

Survey

Directions. Please carefully read the below vignette. After reading both the background information and the statement by Kevin, please answer the questions in Section 1.

Background: Kevin is speaking to Brandon, his college roommate. Kevin is [White American…African American] and grew up in the Chicago area. Brandon is African American and he also grew up in the Chicago area. They have been roommates for one semester.

Kevin: Why do you always play your music so loud? It really bothers me when I'm trying to study. That's something only a [nigga…nigger] would do.

SECTION 1

Directions. Please answer the following questions as they relate **to how you personally felt about the vignette you just read.** Please place an "X" in the box that corresponds to your response.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1) I think that it is ok for Kevin to use the word *nigga…nigger*.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2) It really bothered me that Kevin used the word *nigga…nigger*.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3) If Kevin knew Brandon for a long period of time, then I think that it would be ok for him to use the word *nigga…nigger*.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4) I think that Kevin could have made his point without using the word *nigga…nigger*.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION 2

Directions. Please answer the following questions in regards to **your general understanding** of the n-word. Please place an "X" in the box that corresponds to your response.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1) People should not use the word *nigga*.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2) *Nigga* is an offensive word.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3) People should not use the word *nigger*.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4) *Nigger* is an offensive word.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5) There is a difference between the words *nigga* and *nigger*.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6) There are appropriate times to use the word *nigga*.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Using at least three sentences, please tell us more about your response to item #6: "There are appropriate times to use the word *nigga*."

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Directions. Please answer the following question in regards to **your general understanding** of the n-word. Please place an "X" in the box that corresponds to your response.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7) There are appropriate times to use the word *nigger*.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Using at least three sentences, please tell us more about your response to item #7: "There are appropriate times to use the word *nigger*."

SECTION 3

Directions. Please circle your response to the following questions.

a) How often do you use the word *nigga*?

Never Rarely Frequently Very Often

b) How often do you use the word *nigger*?

Never Rarely Frequently Very Often

SECTION 4

Directions. Please circle your response to the following questions.

a) How often do you hear the word ***nigga*** used by the following groups?

Blacks: Never Rarely Frequently Very Often

Whites: Never Rarely Frequently Very Often

Others: Never Rarely Frequently Very Often

b) How often do you hear the word ***nigger*** used by the following groups?

Blacks:	Never	Rarely	Frequently	Very Often
Whites:	Never	Rarely	Frequently	Very Often
Others:	Never	Rarely	Frequently	Very Often

SECTION 5

Directions. This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate to what extent you feel this way **right now, that is, at the present moment**. Use the following scale to record your answers.

1	2	3	4	5
very slightly or not at all	a little bit	moderately	quite a bit	extremely

Please mark your response to each of the 20 questions using the scale above.

Right now, I feel: (use the 5-point scale)

1. _____interested
2. _____distressed
3. _____excited
4. _____upset
5. _____strong
6. _____guilty
7. _____scared
8. _____hostile
9. _____enthusiastic
10. _____proud
11. _____irritable
12. _____alert
13. _____ashamed
14. _____inspired
15. _____nervous
16. _____determined
17. _____attentive
18. _____jittery
19. _____active
20. _____afraid

SECTION 6

What race is Kevin (the speaker) in the vignette at the beginning of the survey?

African American White American I don't know

What race is Brandon in the vignette at the beginning of the survey?

African American White American I don't know

SECTION 7

Directions. Please tell us about yourself by circling or filling in the following information as completely as possible:

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: ___ Male ___ Female
3. Which religion or spiritual beliefs do you identify with?
   a. Christian (Please specify _____)
   b. Muslim
   c. Hindu
   d. Jewish
   e. Buddhist
   f. Agnostic
   g. Atheist
   h. Other (Please specify _____)

4. Currently, how religious or spiritual are you?
   a. Not at all religious/spiritual
   b. A little religious/spiritual
   c. Somewhat religious/spiritual
   d. Very religious/spiritual

5. What country were you born in? _____

6. If you were <u>not</u> born in the United States, approximately how many years have you lived in the United States? ____ years

7. Where did you spend most of your childhood and adolescent years?
   a. Rural environment
   b. Urban environment
   c. Suburban environment

8. What is your racial or pan-ethnic identification?
   a. Asian/Asian American
   b. Black
   c. Latin/Hispanic
   d. White
   e. Biracial (please specify _____)
   f. Multiracial (please specify _____)
   g. Other (please specify _____)

9. What is your primary ethnic background (e.g., African American, Filipino, Chinese, Taiwanese, French, Mexican American, Italian, Haitian, English, Cuban, etc.)?
_____

10. Please indicate the highest education level of your parent(s)/guardian(s) growing up below.

Mother (female guardian growing up)
   a. Some High School
   b. High School Diploma or Equivalent
   c. Some College
   d. College (Bachelor) Degree
   e. Master's Degree
   f. Doctoral or Professional Degree (e.g., JD, MD, Ph.D.)
   g. Other _____

Father (male guardian growing up)
   a. Some High School
   b. High School Diploma or Equivalent
   c. Some College
   d. College (Bachelor) Degree
   e. Master's Degree
   f. Doctoral or Professional Degree (e.g., JD, MD, Ph.D.)
   g. Other _____

11. Please provide us with the name of each of your parent's current occupation. Please be as specific as possible (sales manager at retail store, secretary at university, Bank manager, etc.)
   Mother (female guardian) _____
   Father (male guardian) _____

Appendix B

Tables in an Appendix

Table B1

Suffix and Speaker Type by Gender

Gender	Suffix, Speaker Type	Suffix, Speaker Type	Suffix, Speaker Type	Suffix, Speaker Type
Men	er, Black	er, White	a, Black	a, White
n = 68	n = 17	n = 17	n = 17	n = 17
Women	er, Black	er, White	a, Black	a, White
n = 98	n = 27	n = 24	n = 21	n = 26

Note: N = 166 total participants